

NORTHERN UFOLOGY

UFO RESEARCH
WHAT SHOULD
WE DO ?



Northern Ufology

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Edited by Jenny Randles (MUFORA)

Address: 23 Sunningdale Drive, Irlam, Salford M30 6NJ

Cover Design: John Watson (CHRYISIS)

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EDITORIAL: "A Critical time to decide"

Some of you have no doubt received a most interesting circular, issued by FUFOR and MAPIT jointly. This intimates that no true liaison is undertaken by NUFON, and in some senses I take their point. NUFON always has had a limited approach and is, in reality, more of a "coordination centre" - pooling data together for the benefit of posterity and future research. Undoubtedly, there are aspects of NUFON which promote liaison, and efforts are underway to further foster this (see P.2). However, the biggest problem remains - and oddly, it was FUFOR themselves who took me to task when I once discussed it in an editorial (no. 38, July 1977). There are, without doubt, two types of UFO group - the hobbyists and the activists.

In order to fulfill its coordination role NUFON must be involved with any association which aims to study the UFO phenomenon. This leads to inevitable problems (shared by open membership bodies such as BUFORA) where only a minority of participants (the activists) respond and take deep interest in wider issues. Whilst this situation cannot be avoided if one is to coordinate all efforts, it can (as it seems to have done with FUFOR and MAPIT) instill great frustration into the small number of activists.

FUFOR/MAPIT have realised this point clearly in their important circular, and have laudably decided to aim for "True Liaison" between themselves, eg - standardisation of methodology, joint research etc. Whilst I can applaud such moves and hope they are precipitative of others (and I know it is not true that no other liaison is going on), it is nonetheless a pity that FUFOR and MAPIT found it necessary to ostracise themselves from the NUFON community.

It seems to me that a similar motivation lay behind the ideas of one or two who wanted to formulate a "British Group Network" (see last issue). Terry Hooper of UFO INTERNATIONAL is certainly one and I would stress that some of you appear to have regarded him as "in competition" when, in truth, he has been more forthcoming than anyone else involved in these plans in keeping us up to date on the concept. Terry is as concerned as we are not to formulate splinter groups in abundance. News of the first meeting (held September 15) is not yet to hand, but I gather minutes will be circulated and there is hope of progress.

It is of interest to note that much of what FUFOR/MAPIT propose in their circular has in fact been attempted by UFOIN since 1977. Improvement of report standards, standardisation and coordination of methodology and coordination of active ufologists (regardless of group allegiances) UFOIN works between individuals not groups because there are very few active ufologists. Several belong to otherwise inactive groups, several are key coordinators of relatively active groups - others prefer to keep apart from groups. For these reasons the individual concept provides better coordination, I feel, than a group system would. I also believe UFOIN is beginning to justify itself and precisely as FUFOR/MAPIT propose in their circular announces "if they do not attain the necessary standards, such reports will not be accepted." The "in depth" UFOIN files at Nottingham will illustrate this point (one case alone has 119 pages of reports, photographs, maps and evaluations!) As FUFOR/MAPIT recognise this sounds dictatorial, but it is the only way ahead - provided the system is not governed by an elite and is open to anyone who meets the standards - as UFOIN.

The UFOIN approach is one way, and the NUFON one is another. Both have distinctive advantages. I am not positive that there is justification for a 'middle road' approach - coordinating only active groups, since this really just duplicates what in combined function NUFON/UFOIN attempts. Nonetheless I do accept that there is fruitful ground for exploring an extension of the FUFOR/MAPIT proposals. Perhaps they will care to provide a paper to the meeting in Nottingham on November 24 (see P.2). Their important ideas can then be discussed by those who care (for the NUFON area at least) since, let's face it, they will be the ones to turn up at the meeting. Let us not waste the opportunity.

THE FUTURE OF NUFON

With the last issue of this magazine a circular was sent to all NUFON groups. This contained important proposals for future development viz:-

- a) A NUFON administration be set up with any nominated person participating. Each individual to have specific responsibility for areas of liaison.
- b) An annual "Status Report" be published on all groups. Including full data, area covered, equipment and specialists available, and a position statement on current research and ideas about the phenomenon. An obvious aid to liaison.
- c) "Sub networks" to be self formulated on the basis of Ireland (already in operation), East Midlands (ditto), West Midlands, North Midlands and Scotland and Borders. Each to specifically coordinate local investigation better - but NUFON to overall coordinate as at present.

Not suprisingly there has been a low response with just the activists even bothering to comment on what are significant proposals. However, as reaction was favourable from those responding a NUFON meeting has been called to discuss the moves. NUFOIS (Nottingham) are to be hosts and the provisional date set is NOVEMBER 24 1979. Full details will be included in the next issue, but if you wish them in the meantime contact NUFOIS (SAE please) at: 443 Meadow Lane, Nottingham NG2 3GB or phone Bob Morrell on 0602-860010.

Representation at the meeting ought to be considered essential by any group who believes itself active. It is conceivable that even wider issues of liaison will come to be discussed. It has been decided that the meeting will have a theme of "UFO Investigation" and group coordination". It will commence with papers, presented by any group or individual, on this "coordination" theme and will be followed by debate and resolution. These papers should be concise (no longer than 15 minutes) and make specific points or proposals. Even if you have never spoken publicly before, present one if you have something to say. Groups outside the NUFON system are cordially invited to contribute also. Brief abstracts (ie notes on content) should be forwarded to NUFON by November 1st so that an outline of propositions may be circulated next issue. Full papers should also be subsequently made available (on request) for publication. I hope everyone seriously concerned about liaison and coordination (in all its many aspects - investigation, research, skywatching etc etc) will contribute to the debate.

It is hoped (as with usual practice) to round off proceedings with one or two more general papers so that you do not travel just for a meeting. It is anticipated that the meeting will run from about 1.30 to 6pm.... BE THERE!

NEWS

:: This month's topic provided some most interesting ideas, which perhaps will not just be read and discarded. In line with the NUFON meeting in November the theme for the January issue will be: "UFOLOGY IN BRITAIN - How should it be organised?" Your views on groups, networks and future approaches please.

:: Attempts are to be made to resurrect the dormant but greatly needed INVESTIGATOR TRAINING COURSE. Would anyone who feels they are willing/able to assist in developing and running such a scheme please contact the editor.

:: Subscriptions for January - December 1980 are now being accepted from NUN and Northern Ufology readers. The price has been held steady for two years but inflation has forced enormous rises in paper and duplicator costs over the recent period. We have kept to a minimum the enforced rise (well below inflation level over the period), but 1980 subscriptions will be £3.60 for 12 issues.

:: You will all know of the disastrous crash of two Harrier jets over Wisbech on September 21. One of our subscribers (Dana Parry - editor of UPNB) lives in the road involved in the accident. His house was not one of those destroyed by the crash but we can only hope that he did not suffer in any way from the disaster. If he did then we send our sympathy.

REVIEWS:

A new book to look out for is "ENCOUNTERS WITH THE PAST" by Peter Moss. It covers hypnotic regression experiments and the hypnotist involved is Joe Keeton (who performed the experiments on Gaynor Sunderland - see previous NUNs). It costs £7.95, but includes two records so you can hear the regressions. SKYWATCH (MAPIT) Aug/Sep contains much foreign material and an important article by Mark Moravec of ACOS, Australia, on "The Ethics of UFO Investigation". ENCOUNTER 79 (36 Torkington St, Edgeley, Stockport, SK3 9JS) is issued FREE and aims to "stand against the bad ufologist" and be highly critical. Issue 2 starts to comment on NUFON. EARTHLINK is now issued separate from the Essex UFO Study Group but same address. Full account of the Jean Hingley CE3 (mince pies and all!)

Ron Sargeant (Freelance UFO Investigator) (Ron is a former RAF service officer)

The Doyen of Ufology, Allen Hynek, once said that there must be enough information in the mass of reports to find the answer to the UFO phenomenon if one only knew 'What', 'Why', 'Where' and 'How' to use it. That statement makes sense but only if you have a base idea.

Research may be defined as careful search and inquiry, scientific investigation and study to discover facts. So what is a UFO? Careful search and inquiry into the report of a UFO incident can establish all the basic facts as far as the witness remembers and understands it. To a certain extent groups or individuals can carry out elementary scientific studies, but finance and qualifications are a limiting factor. How I would love to get a UFO for close scrutiny, but we all know how elusive they are.

So - the main ingredient into research (a UFO!) is unobtainable. Unless one does a great deal of skywatching you will most likely never even see one. Yet this is, I think, the first point of research. Skywatching, as a subject, is not very popular with supposedly serious ufologists, but I feel it has value. Actually if the whole of the population was to do absolutely nothing else but skywatch then I think we would find a valuable return for this activity.

Skywatching is regular for some groups, and these do provide interesting results. For example, showing how an object can be tracked across country and be seen from varying directions. Sometimes by this method a positive identification can be made. There is also another form of skywatching that is very valuable - the radar watch.

If anyone has access to air traffic centres then it could be extremely useful. A nationwide radar coverage is in operation, although information is difficult to come by. Military radars are no doubt of even more interest, but here the difficulties are increased, not just from the cooperative viewpoint but also because the 'Official Secrets Act' steps in.

What would be the most productive research subject? The preceding paragraphs have shown one aspect, but also the obstructions to it. I mentioned the 'base idea' and this is the most important ingredient of our research. Think out what UFOs are and then research in that direction. Dragging in 'Skywatching', radar reports, photography, instrumental effects etc may be required, but all research must be done open mindedly. If you are LTH inclined and a seemingly psychic aspect comes up - consider it! The same is true in reverse. Do not discard in favour of just one application of possibilities.

In researching UFOs I would say a most valuable commodity is imagination. Though many will disagree and say it is unscientific it must be remembered that some of science's most successful findings have owed a lot to imagination. Take Darwin as an example. What is extra-terrestrial or natural evolution? That is another story - or is it? Above all else be thorough and determined.

Stephen Banks UFORA (BUFORA & UFOIN) (Coordinator of UFOIN physical trace team.)

If the basic contention behind research is that it will help in the accumulation of knowledge of the subject under study, then I feel that a new facet must be added to our research projects.

Many ufologists have found the 'New Ufology', formulated along basically psychological lines, of instant appeal. The danger is of course that they will cling to fashionable ideas that have no real foundation in what is termed consensus reality. In this case, however, there is sufficient evidence in my view to indicate that a large body of 'psychic - UFO' linked events have occurred. In fact I, like most people, started in the UFO field wholly ignorant of any bridging of the two sets of phenomena. I try to remain entirely objective and realise that many reports of an unidentified nature have no psychic or paranormal features whatsoever, but that a preponderance of close encounter witnesses claim personal experiences of a kind encompassed by the term 'Parapsychological occurrences'.

I propose, therefore, that a balanced research system would be comprised of the many people already attempting very good research into areas such as landing reports, EM effects etc, and also those who probe the witnesses themselves (their psychological traits etc) On a further level it also needs those who peer into the nebulous waters of allegedly paranormal experiences claimed by certain UFO

percipients. Many might argue that this is not the way of progress, but merely a retreat, grasping uncertainties (unexplained psychic experiences) to try to explain other uncertainties (unexplained UFO events). I contend that this is not the case and that such people, in the name of objectivity, are being subjective and restricting the effect of a broad based attack by an amalgam of the physical sciences, psychology and parapsychology.

The basic idea of all research is to weigh carefully all the various components of a system under study and to gradually break down the unknown to include it in the known. To draw an analogy - how could natives of the Indonesian hinterland figure out an automobile's purpose and the mode of mechanical function of its engine, if they failed to include the carburettor and other vital components merely because they did not believe they had anything to do with the principal system? A daft situation, I know, but a valid statement I think.

Obviously a researcher into the various fields will have pet theories, as it were. Landing Trace specialists such as I (I am a chemist) will be inclined towards 'physically objective externalised phenomena' hypotheses, whereas a psychologically interested party will find Jungian archetype theories at least of interest. Thus you can see that by only viewing part of the phenomenon, a very false picture is obtained.

Just because a CE3 witness alleges 'psychokinetic' abilities it does not effectively nullify the ETH. So far, no data presented to me has undeniably destroyed any of the major hypotheses, ranging from the aforementioned ETH to the wholly different sociological viewpoint. The trouble is that too many people embark on research projects in an attempt to verify their own personally held views.

I believe that much work on the physical factors is already being attempted that will greatly augment our knowledge (eg Bloecher and Philips in the USA); Jan Heerings papers on solid light phenomena etc. Now a balance is being achieved with more conceptual thinkers such as Sprinkle, Berthold Schwarz et alia. We too have a chance to balance our perception of the phenomenon in research circles by the suggested liaison with the Society for Psychical Research, and other such means. I am sure that this will produce some effect, if only to enable researchers and investigators to gaze at the whole and not the part, despite a restrictive view and specialisation being a prerequisite of research.

To summarise then, I would say that research must proceed along both physical and non-physical pathways for the broad spectrum of UFO events to be understood to a far greater degree. After all, it only takes an open mind and a willingness to learn.

UFO RESEARCH- WHAT SHOULD WE DO? 3) "Basic Steps towards research"

John Watson CHRYSIS (BUFORA RIC, N. East & UFOIN)

We are all familiar with the innumerable stimuli which can give rise to a UFO sighting, but how often do we take an objective look at how well these stimuli are investigated? There are dozens of UFO groups throughout the country which too often tend to be biased towards one theory or another in their work. Nuts and bolts - natural phenomena - psychic manifestations - how can a group which allows itself to be swayed in such a manner carry out a truly unbiased investigation?

To obtain a satisfactory result with a particular case questions pertinent to all such theories (and others) must be asked. How often does a nuts and bolts investigator ask if a witness has ever seen a ghost? The reverse applies with equal vigour.

One of the major steps towards sensible research has to be obtaining precise data in the first place. To this end all research groups will have to start thinking about carrying out more detailed investigation. A group which allows itself to remain biased in any way is useless, even to themselves, since the information they gather must be incomplete.

Even if we get all groups to think along more open lines our problem is but partly solved. If we go on amassing cases all it produces is a pile of cases. We need to use the information in these cases to instigate a number of research programmes exploring the various aspects of ufology. At the same time these must be liaised closely together. This is where a group's individual beliefs can be useful. Each group should begin long term research projects based on specific theories they have for UFO origin. Each case they investigate should, however, be

treated as if any of the main theories could have provided the stimulus. If the case develops along lines useful to their own research then it should be used to that end, but if it develops along different lines then the information should be passed onto a group whose research it most resembles. The new NUFON idea of issuing position statements on all member groups will help in this.

Such a programme would require an enormous amount of organisation, cooperation and above all understanding. It is of no use if a group opts out of an established network merely because its theories are different. Any group which operates like that provides data which is not within the system, and is therefore almost useless! Remember we all want the answers to the same questions!

The idea for cooperative research is not new. Various people have already put forward excellent ideas for ambitious research projects with high hopes of success. Alas, this enthusiasm is met with the third major bug-bear that is around these days - APATHY!

Few people even bother to respond to these ideas, and the high hopes are soon dashed to the ground. Where are all the so-called dedicated ufologists? Do we want to learn those answers or not? It is true that many ufologists have much on their plate, being members of half a dozen different groups, writing articles, producing magazines etc. Yet what of the rest, who carry out the odd investigation but do nothing else?

It is high time people started getting off their proverbial backsides (or high horses - whichever is applicable) - and then started mucking in! A good start would be to attend conferences. These afford ideal opportunities for meeting others, making contacts and working things out to satisfaction. It worked at London - so it can work again.

As I see it there are three stages towards a serious research programme:-

- 1) The most important is to cure ourselves of this mindless apathy and start using some of the information we get instead of admiring it like wallpaper.
- 2) All groups, regardless of favourite theories, should investigate on the assumption that anything could have provided the stimulus and act accordingly.
- 3) All groups, singly or jointly, should begin a research programme based upon relevant theories, and should liaise closely with other, divergent, projects for data exchange.

If we stay apart we are wasting time and effort. Together we may just find some answers. Let's make it work!

UFO RESEARCH - WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

4) "UFO Research - The Way ahead?"

Martin Keatman UFORA (BUFORA RIC & UFOIN) (UFOIN humanoid project coordinator)

Before we begin to discuss research a fundamental question must be asked. Can the human race, at its present level of scientific knowledge and conception, successfully conduct investigation of a phenomenon so vast and complex with hope of discovering any meaningful facts about its nature and origin? I strongly suspect the answer is no: that however much we record and research we will not come any nearer the truth than we are permitted to.

We could imagine a group of sixteenth century scholars observing a modern jet aircraft. They could record its passage, possibly even draw it, and then ponder what they had seen. With their level of knowledge, however, it is most unlikely that they could even conceive of the principles involved.

We may ourselves be in such a position with the UFO. We are obviously dealing with an intelligence order which greatly surpasses our own. Therefore we could fairly question if our patterns of thought and reality are radically different to those behind the phenomenon. This seems a reasonable suggestion. Indeed its framework of reality may be on a basis that we cannot even conceive.

If we assume for the sake of argument that this is so - which of course it may not be - our application of scientific method to the problem is probably invalid.

In response to this rather daunting prospect we can take heart in that a sudden discovery or theoretical modification could drastically alter our own vision of reality - with perhaps amazing consequences. Many modern physicists have come to realise that our current theories of reality, time etc are inadequate and that they may need considerable modification. Additionally, who is to say that the process of evolution is complete? I think it plausible that man is still far from realising his full potential, especially where the mind is concerned. Bearing all this in mind we may outline what appears to be a sensible way of approaching UFO investigation and research.

1: Scientific Method:

Since scientific dogmas are governed by perceptions of reality, true research can only be confined to this reality; unless or until its boundaries are further expanded. We know from experience that the only way to conduct research is by adopting an objective approach to a problem. It is the sole reason that man has progressed from a cave-living existence. Although many of us are not scientists in the true sense, this is no way prevents objectivity or the employment of scientific method. It is surely far better to emulate the scientist than not. Very helpful in this area are two articles I would recommend. "Advice for Ufology" and "Rationality and its limitations" both by Dr I Grattan-Guinness. (1) They illustrate the above point clearly.

2: Investigation:

Since all research is based on this it is imperative that the highest standard of accuracy and presentability be attained. At the NUFON meeting in Crewe (Feb 24 1979) Peter Warrington outlined the many factors to be accounted for in the witness interview. These were mainly concerned with visual perception, stress etc. Whilst highly commendable it would be difficult, if not impossible, to adopt such ideas with any degree of practicability.

It is a major difficulty to know how to interview a witness, since everyone has a unique personality. It would be best at the beginning of an interview to stipulate - in forceful but genial terms - that a witness should say if he is uncertain of anything. An invaluable aid to anyone with minimal experience of interviewing UFO percipients was produced by Trevor Whitaker (2).

Since investigation also involves the interviewer care must be taken by them. Biased preconceptions must under no circumstances be consciously introduced. It may be argued that we should not question a witness regarding other, possibly related, experiences (eg the familiar 'psychic phenomena') since we are primarily concerned with obtaining information on the UFO report. I personally feel, however, that if such events objectively exist they should be documented. The reason is simple. If the UFO event is a close encounter, and if he has had previous or subsequent psychic experiences, then there is at least a case for a possible linkage. To blindly state that we should simply question a witness about the UFO experience is, to say the least, rather short-sighted.

Another neglected aspect is the need of the witness for a counsellor. Many percipients have had traumatic experiences, and it is up to the investigator to provide what help he can. I would now like to quote from a paper presented by John Brent Musgrave to the CUFOS conference in Chicago in April 1976 (3) "Attention has focused on the UFO percipient as a source of information. But at field investigator level little attention has been paid to the UFO percipient as a person who has experienced something that potentially is the most traumatic or 'meaningful' experience of life" He goes on, "...In addition to uncovering valuable data, attention must be paid to the well-being of the person who has experienced the phenomenon. Lack of attention to this on the part of some UFO investigators has meant that investigations have sometimes heightened the anxiety associated with a UFO event. It may even turn out that the investigators role as healer or counsellor outweighs their role as data gatherers. UFO investigation has to be concerned with ethics as well as scientific method."

These quotes outline a virtually untouched area, but a responsibility the investigator must accept. The need for practical training of close encounter investigation is urgent. How many times do we hear of a witness refusing to say more about the events, following the approach of cultist or inexperienced (and consequently unsympathetic) investigators?

A final very important point concerns the actual approach to the witness. It is not for the investigator to dress grandly and speak like royalty when the witness is obviously incompatible with this lifestyle. The converse applies also. An irresponsible attitude will immediately introduce stress. It is imperative to discover the percipients lifestyle and conduct oneself accordingly. Such points may seem trivial but they are not. Witnesses can be alienated from the investigator otherwise. On more bizarre cases witnesses must feel at ease to relate their information, and so an investigator must make every effort to be friendly. The witness must have a high opinion of the investigators.

I have dwelt on investigation as it is the root problem. Not enough proper investigations are conducted, and we therefore lack source data for research.

3: The Case Report:

A report criteria, formulated by John Hind, is being published by UFOIN shortly. I will add no more at this stage.

4: Present Research:

In the UK we have something of a dilemma. Very little research has, or is being, done. It is a situation that must change as we know virtually nothing more than we did 30 years ago. We must continue to become properly organised, adopt standard terminology, methodology and specific research groups. We also need to continue to use traditional methods such as computers and statistics. We must also see why we are not coming up with answers, and I would like to propose an approach that encompasses all aspects of an event.

5: A Proposal: Steps must be taken to remove ourselves from this rut. I would contend that we have concentrated too long on the details of reported manifestations. All this work has yielded little except archetypes of shape, colour etc. This must surely prove the approach is wrong. I propose that we must change our misguided path and look at all aspects of UFOs and associated phenomena with an open mind.

THE EVENT: We should continue to collate material on the physical characteristics, but also make note of the circumstances in which the sighting was made (witness movements, psychological reactions etc)

PERCIPIENT: Far more attention must be paid to the percipient as an integral part of the event; psychological and physiological make-up, interests, hobbies, knowledge, feelings towards the phenomenon, claimed para-normal abilities. An evaluation by a trained psychologist would help.

SIGHTING :: The mental state of the witness when the sighting was made; atmospheric conditions (temperature, pressure, cloud cover and level); comprehensive site details are all vital factors.

PHENOMENA: Question the witness about having observed other strange events, and check out for previous sightings by him or his family. Check if the events occurred on a ley-line (now verified by computer at London University); check previous sightings in the area, other events, history of the area (eg hauntings, folklore etc). We should consider messages from trance mediums, automatic writing etc with the similarities (if any) recorded and researched. Abilities of PK and telepathy should be considered. All paranormal events should be viewed as part of a whole.

There are those who will question much of the above due to a bias they possess. If there is no association with other such events then there is no reason why questioning will not support this non-association. It is time to leave the well worn trail of UFO social meetings, petty bickering and personality clashes. This has led us up the garden path, probably the right way without our realising it.

We should consider everything, sifting with strict objectivity and looking at all that passes through. I say this with misgivings since I have no doubt we will only know what we are supposed to. At least if we adopt the proposal and find no answers we will have made a more determined effort - and enjoyed it too!

1) "Advice for Ufology" -FSR Vol 22 No 4, p 12

"Rationality and its limitations" FSR Vol. 19 No 5, p 22

2) "Investigation Procedures" published by BUFORA Ltd.

3) "The UFO Investigator as counsellor and Healer" FSR Vol 22 No 5, p 26

UFO RESEARCH - WHAT SHOULD WE DO? 5) "A Radical Proposition"

Jenny Randles MUFORA (UFOIN) (Secretarial Assistant of FSR Publications)

Knowing what to do - and how to do it - regarding UFO research is a perennial and vital question. If all we ever do is collect reports we obviously get nowhere. It's rather like counting, one by one, the grains of sand on Blackpool beach. After 30 years you realise you have counted one million somethings, but you are no nearer working out what those somethings are, nor what they form when placed together.

Of course a basic question has to be whether UFO reports are isolated grains or a composite whole. If we analyse each grain we get one solution (chemical composition - silica, quartz etc) and if analyse the beach another (a shifting fluid like solid that interacts in many ways with wind, water etc). It is not as simple as might be thought to decide whether we should study UFO reports or a composite "UFO phenomenon".

My basic contention is that the phenomenon is multi-faceted and it is pointless defining research without realising this. Also research must be multi-disciplined because there are many aspects of science (physical and social) that are interwoven. A psychologist will, not surprisingly, look for proof that all UFOs

share elements of "mass psychosis", whereas a physicist will attempt to define physical principles. The problem is that one or other might be totally correct, partly correct or completely wrong, so far as the true nature of UFOs is concerned.

Consequently, I feel it is impossible to say what we should do so far as research is concerned. Rather we must encourage multi-disciplined approaches from individual standpoints in the hope that answers will slowly fit together. The real difficulty comes in deciding which data each specialist should study. Specialists have a nasty habit of selectivity, discarding data which does not seem to fit their field. This could be the downfall of all research. The only way is, unfortunately, duplication. Either two specialists must do the same research or each specialist must do it twice. I will explain.

Assume that a psychologist attempts to look for evidence that UFO reports are products of mass hysteria. He must both examine every case (even those which do not seem to fit) and also select those which, to him, do seem relevant and look for patterns in these. If there is an all embracing answer he will find it (if his approach is the right one) since all reports will fit it. If only some of the data fits his theory then he will be able to demonstrate this with reference to the data which fits and that which does not (which will have clearly distinctive attributes). A similar methodology must be adopted by all researchers.

I will cite my own opinions about UFOs as example. I feel the whole phenomenon has a psychological component (causing a distortion of visual perception due to factors such as 'Belief'). In extreme cases (certain contacts) this may be the actual source of UFO data, but in other instances it is just a manipulative element (distorting other phenomena into a UFO context). I further believe that many UFOs are explicable as rare or presently unknown natural phenomena (optical, electrical, meteorological etc). Some UFO accounts are perfect examples of these, and it is purely investigatory preconceptions which twist the interpretation to anything else. Others are heavily influenced by psychological overtones. As for anything else - the EXOTIC UFO I call it - I am not convinced it even exists! I do not deny the possibility of course, but it may be that the solutions I have proposed so far are enough in themselves.

My personal research solution would, therefore, seem heretical. To proceed on the assumption (not belief) that EXOTIC UFOs don't exist. We still need many kinds of specialist from both sides of science, but I would wait to see how they fared before deciding what - if anything - remained. It could be all their efforts would still leave a shady area (the EXOTIC UFO) and we would then have to propose theories for its interpretation. On the other hand they may effectively explain everything. Since this is a possibility we really should tackle this problem first. We seem to be one step ahead of ourselves - researching an exotic enigma which we have no conclusive proof exists.

Much the same proposition was put forward by Peter Warrington and I in "UFOs: A British Viewpoint" but we did also kick around ideas for the 'EXOTIC UFO' if it exists. Such an approach must be logical.

Even if the foregoing is valid (and it may not be) ufologists are not redundant. We are specifically good at collecting data and aiding witnesses and should continue to do this with greater effect. No doubt some of us will be able to research these physical/psychological possibilities and I would not even deny the value of proposing testable "exotic" theories. Paul Whetnall proposed an extremely interesting idea that a natural electrical phenomenon may scramble brain waves and trigger psychological experiences. Pat Grant of UFOIN is also working on similarities between UFO encounter effects and migraine and epilepsy sufferers. The point is that for research to be meaningful one must propose a theory - suggest the effects of it being true - then test them against the data. One can do this for all the ideas suggested so far in this article. One cannot do it for the ETH or interdimensional ideas etc, since it is impossible to predict the effects of such theories being true. Consequently I argue it is logical to discard them for the time being (even if in the long term they are valid).

Personally I would like to see a study on the lines of the CONDON Commission, involving a number of researchers testing different workable hypotheses against standardised good quality data. At the end of a set time period each individual's work could be collated, published and studied by external scientific opinion to decide whether the work had adequately explained the areas of UFOlogy or whether there was scope for broader possibilities. Either way we would have learnt a lot.

Needless to say the likelihood is not high that such a project will come about within the scientific fraternity just now, but I feel that there are enough

dedicated and knowledgeable ufologists in Britain to initiate such a study now ourselves. When published it may set scientific minds at work.

If anyone reading this feels, as I do, that we not only could but should do this to give an injection of life into UFO research I very much would like to hear from them. Perhaps, then, we can stop talking, and start doing, something positive!

INVESTIGATIONS SECTION

LOW DEFINITION ACTIVITY

Ref	Date	Time	Location	Event	Investigation	Eval.
78-241	Jul 16	23.11	Glasgow, Scotland	Triangular LITS	David Sydeserff	D Insuff
7964	Feb ?	21.00	Clayton, Staffs	Red & beams	UFORA <u>A</u>	Helicopter
7968	Jul 2	00.30	St Helens, Msyside	W LITS (30min)	MIGAP <u>C</u>	Star?
7969	Jul 26	00.55	Kirkby, Msyside	W LITS	MIGAP <u>C</u>	Aircraft?
7970	Aug 5	01.42	Cannock, Staffs	Buzzing LITS	UFOSIS <u>B</u>	Aircraft
7971	Sep 5	20.20	Bluxton, Staffs	R & W LITS	UFORA <u>A</u>	Helicopter

MEDIUM DEFINITION ACTIVITY

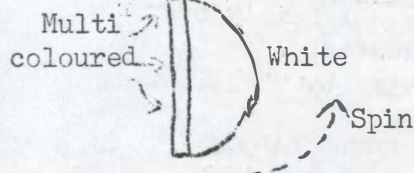
4101	Summer	13.15	Rainhill, Msyside		MIGAP <u>C</u>	Insuff
(Fire Officer saw grey cigar dart v. fast about sky, hovering 4 times in 5 mins)						
6617	June	22.00	Galloway, Scotland		David Sydeserff	B Insuff
(Woman and family saw cigar for 4 mins. Green/Orange haze surrounding it)						
7966	Mar 22	03.00	Solihull, W. Midlands		UFOSIS <u>A</u>	Meteor?
(Woman PC saw for 4 secs a large cigar, white with sharp outline. Moving like meteor but she claims it was <u>very</u> large - estimates 120' + - several other PCs in Coventry allegedly witness also. Attempts being made to trace these)						
907	Jun 1	13.15	Newcastle, Staffs		UFORA <u>A</u>	Insuff
(Woman and daughter saw silver/black oval fall, like leaf on breeze, then climb away at angle in similar manner. 5 mins duration. Possible wind blown debris?)						

SPINNING SAUCER OVER STOURPORT

Investigation by Peter Hobben (UFOSIS)

February 17 1979 Stourport, W. Westershire Level A MED UNKNOWN

Two 13 year old girls were witness to a strange object as they travelled the few yards from one of their houses to another. At first they assumed it was an aircraft but it remained statibary and silent in the SE. It was also rotating on its axis and flashing colours (red, blue, green and orange). They crossed a playing field as a short cut, a little frightened by it, and saw it had moved - it now being in the ENE. It was estimated as 200 yards away and 200 feet off the ground. They stood watching it rotate for 5 minutes,



and then saw it climb slightly and move away N, before back-tracking and moving away SE, disappearing at 150 bearing. No sound or effects noted at any time. The girls ran to the house where one of their fathers came out but saw nothing. Due to their fear it was reported to the police. No aircraft were in the area

and the cloud ceiling was 2-300 feet at the time of sighting (21.00) Visibility was only 2-3 Km and wind speed 8 knots from the NNE. In view of this no plausible explanation seems possible.

(PS: Both these girls lived at No 23 respectively in their roads. It has struck me how prominent this number is in UFO circles - and not just because I live at No 23! An article on page 32 of Issue 23 of FORTEAN TIMES gives much thought on the enigma of the apparant significant coincidences involving this number..EDITOR)

LOW LEVEL GIANT UFO IN CHESHIRE

Investigation by Martin Keatman (UFORA)

November 28 1978 Holmes Chapel, Cheshire Level B CE 1 EM? UNKNOWN

This is a most impressive case, extremely well investigated. Anthony Lakin, who works with the witness, obtained a report form and interview within 3 days of the events and so the details would appear to be very consistant. The witness (age 26) is senior projectionist at a cinema in Stafford but works for Securicor part-time. He is regarded as reliable, observant and trustworthy. His wife attests to his excited and slightly shocked state on arrival home after the incident.

First a sighting on November 17 (17 days before) is relevant. The witness was previously sceptical about UFOs. On this night he was driving a new Securicor Escort out of Northwich when he saw two white lights (as bright as Venus) side by side. His Pye Olympic transmitting radio was on (in low receiving mode so as he would not be startled suddenly) and this was drowned out with static. He put on the squelch control but this had no effect. After five seconds the light streaked away into cloud. Time was 04.00

At a similar time on November 20 he was driving a Securicor load to Warrington on the M6 and was passing close to the Holmes Chapel junction (18). A 'shooting star' to his left attracted his attention, seemingly landing in the adjacent fields. Then



he saw a very large stationary oval light in the NW. He slowed and watched it, and was very puzzled. He turned off the Junction slip road, stopped and got out - leaving engine and radio on. A car raced by, but he could not

stop it. Then the light began to move slowly towards him. He watched as it came silently and extremely low (estimate 59 metres). In panic (he thought it had seen him) he stepped back to the van door and heard the radio again suffering intense static. The van engine was not effected. He switched off the radio. The object passed directly overhead on a SE course and was extremely large (a large dinner plate at arms length) Due to its speed it took eight seconds to pass fully overhead. The underside was dark and bevelled, seemingly metallic. There appeared to be a fin at the rear. The light was coming out from the front in two beams angled up and down at 45 degree angles. The lower one was so bright it cast a shadow on the ground. For a short while, when closest to overhead, he heard a faint buzzing but otherwise total silence despite the extreme low height. The object moved away in a curve SE and in all was in view 4 minutes. Weather was cold (minus five), no wind and no cloud. Manchester Airport had no traffic. It is most interesting to compare this with case 78-214 investigated by Peter Warrington which occurred just 33 hours before at Whalley Bridge about 15 M east. Here 3 students saw an almost identical object - dark, massive, slow and silent with a 'fin' at the rear and huge searchlights at the front. That too was unexplained!

A FAMILY AND UFOs Multiple sightings and PSI events Investigated David Sydeserff

Richard MacDowell (65) his wife and grown up daughter Marion all claim multiple sightings and ESP events. Marion is claimed to be very psychic. Witnesses believe in ETH and that only psychic people see UFOs. This may be relevant. Marion has faulty eyesight. Richard had a brain operation in 1967. Witnesses live in Edinburgh.

September 1940 - 21.30 Husband and wife saw stationary cigar with short blue flames at rear. Hovered 2 mins then sped away fast to the south. No sound.

Winter 76-77 - 06.00 dark mass took off in pitch black from park (where Richard was walking the dog) Very large with series of square windows on edge. Crawled along the ground before rising into the sky and passing overhead very low.

Summer 1977 - 22.00 golden ball changing shape to cigar seen by all family over Meadowbank stadium - moving about above stand. Duration up to 25 minutes.

Late September 1978 22.00 - large ball of white light seen moving by whole family. Silent. Aircraft seen before was deafening.

Jan 25 1979 - 01.00 whole family saw blinking blue light which moved slowly then hovered. Aircraft flew underneath - seen clearly as aircraft and heard. UFO then disappeared.

All these sightings occurred in Edinburgh except the 1978 (Torremolinos, Spain) PSI experiences include mystery sounds, footsteps and several ghosts seen by all three - including their dead cat (which the dog saw also and reacted), and a Roman Legionnaire. Mrs M also heard her grandmother calling her after she died.

Dr John Beloff (the SPR) who is from the Psychology department at Edinburgh University heard the interview tapes and proposed that the family "had some kind of collective hallucination which they shared. The PSI has no more objective reality than the UFOs" The investigator has reservations about this idea.

CASES THIS MONTH: 13 2 UFO (= 15.4%) 5 Insuff data, 2 Helicopter, 2 Aircraft, 1 Meteor, 1 Star.

Cases from: Scotland, Merseyside, Cheshire, Staffs, W, Midlands, Worcestershire
Thanks to: David Sydeserff, CHRYSIS (John Watson), MIGAP, MUFORA (Ron Sergeant),
UFORA (Stephen Banks & Martin Keatman), UFOSIS